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وَقَالُوا أُتِّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا

And They say, “The Most Compassionate has offspring.”

19:88

Christmas and What Should Muslims Do?

1. Origin of Christmas

Christmas, celebrated on December 25th, is observed as the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) by Christians worldwide. Historically, this date was not the actual birthday of Jesus but was chosen to align with pagan festivals marking the winter solstice. Over time, it became a significant event within Christian traditions, encompassing both religious and secular elements, such as gift-giving, tree decorations, and festive gatherings.

The celebration has evolved, with modern customs often focusing more on commercial aspects than its original religious significance. For Muslims, it is essential to understand these origins to make informed decisions about their participation and stance.

- **Pagan Roots:** The date coincides with Roman festivals like Saturnalia and the celebration of the "Unconquered Sun" (Sol Invictus). These were pagan winter solstice festivals involving feasting, gift-giving, and decorations.
- **Adoption by Christianity:** Early Christians adopted December 25th as the birth of Jesus to replace pagan festivities with Christian significance, although the exact date of Jesus' birth is unknown.
- **Modern Practices:** Over time, Christmas incorporated secular customs, such as Santa Claus, Christmas trees, and exchanging gifts, which have no biblical basis.

For Muslims, understanding the origins of Christmas highlights that it is not rooted in the teachings of 'Isa (AS) but rather in a blend of religious and cultural traditions.

2. Meaning of Christmas in Islam

In Islam, Jesus (peace be upon him) is regarded as a noble prophet and a servant of Allah, not the son of Allah. The Quran emphasizes that attributing divinity or sonship to Jesus is a grave error:

“They say, ‘The Most Merciful has taken a son.’ You have uttered a monstrosity at which the heavens almost rupture, the earth splits, and the mountains fall crumbling – that they

attribute to the Most Merciful a son. It is not appropriate for the Most Merciful to have a son.” (Surah Maryam, 19:88-92)

The Quran categorically rejects the concept of Allah having offspring. Celebrating Christmas, a holiday rooted in beliefs contrary to Islamic teachings, is not permissible for Muslims. It involves endorsing the concept of Jesus as the son of God, which conflicts with the core Islamic tenet of Tawheed (monotheism).

Islamic View on Prophet Jesus (Isa, peace be upon him)

- Jesus (peace be upon him) was a prophet, born miraculously without a father, as a sign from Allah.
- He called people to worship Allah alone and never claimed divinity.
- His mother, Maryam (peace be upon her), is honored as a virtuous and pious woman.

The Quran repeatedly clarifies these points to correct misconceptions propagated by other religious beliefs.

3. Wishing Christmas

Saying "Merry Christmas"

"Merry Christmas" is a common greeting used to celebrate Christmas, the Christian holiday marking the birth of Jesus Christ. Here's a breakdown of what it signifies:

1. **"Merry"**: This word means joyful, cheerful, or happy. It conveys a wish for happiness and celebration.
2. **"Christmas"**: This word comes from the Old English phrase **"Cristes Maesse"**, which means "Christ's Mass." It refers to a special religious service or feast in honor of Jesus Christ.

Combined Meaning

: When someone says "Merry Christmas," they are wishing joy and happiness in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. The phrase implies acknowledgment of the Christian belief that Jesus is the son of God and the savior of humanity, a belief contrary to Islamic teachings.

Muslims are encouraged to maintain respect and kindness towards non-Muslims but should refrain from statements or actions that compromise their beliefs.

When a Muslim wishes someone "Merry Christmas," it implies an endorsement of the celebration and its underlying beliefs. This is problematic from an Islamic perspective because it acknowledges ideas contrary to Tawheed.

Shaykh Ibn al-Qayyim stated

"Congratulating non-Muslims on their religious festivals implies approval of their disbelief."
(Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma)

Hadith on Attributing a Child to Allah

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) conveyed the words of Allah in a hadith qudsi:

"The son of Adam abused Me, and he had no right to do so. He abused Me by saying that I have a child, while I am the One, the Eternal Refuge. I beget not, nor was I begotten, and there is none co-equal or comparable to Me." (Sahih al-Bukhari 4974, Sahih Muslim 112)

This hadith underscores the severity of attributing a child to Allah and reflects His anger towards such claims. Muslims must refrain from any words or actions that could align with or support this falsehood.

Implications of Wishing Christmas

By wishing "Merry Christmas," a Muslim indirectly endorses beliefs that Allah has a son, a concept strongly condemned in Islam. This can lead to serious spiritual consequences and must be avoided to preserve one's faith.

4. Allah's Anger and Punishments

Allah's anger is mentioned in the Quran and hadith as a response to actions and beliefs that contravene His commands. Claiming that Allah has a son is one of the gravest sins, as it violates the essence of Tawheed. And lead to shirk

The Quran states:

"Indeed, Allah does not forgive associating partners with Him, but He forgives anything else of whoever He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has certainly gone far astray." (Surah An-Nisa, 4:116)

Expressions of Allah's Anger

- The heavens and earth nearly split apart at the false attribution of a child to Allah. (Surah Maryam, 19:88-92)
- Such statements constitute shirk (associating partners with Allah), the gravest sin in Islam.
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- **Punishments for Shirk**

The punishments for blasphemy and shirk include:

- **Eternal Separation from Allah's Mercy:** The Quran declares Hell as the eternal abode for those who commit shirk unless they repent.
- **Worldly Degradation:** A life devoid of Allah's blessings and guidance.

The severity of these punishments highlights the importance of maintaining strict monotheism.

5. Guidance for Muslims

- **Avoid Participation:** Muslims should avoid participating in Christmas celebrations, as doing so contradicts Islamic beliefs.
- **Maintain Respect:** While abstaining from these celebrations, Muslims should maintain respect and kindness towards non-Muslims, embodying the Quranic principle: **"Allah does not forbid you from being kind and just towards those who have not fought you because of your religion and have not expelled you from your homes."** (Surah Al-Mumtahanah, 60:8)
- **Strengthen Faith in Tawheed:** Educate yourself and others about the importance of Tawheed and the dangers of engaging in activities that undermine it.
- **Spread Awareness:** Share Islamic teachings about the respect and honor given to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) while clarifying the misconceptions about his nature.

Practical Tips for Muslims

1. **Use the Occasion for Dawah:** Gently explain the Islamic perspective on Jesus and the Oneness of Allah to non-Muslims.
2. **Strengthen Bonds:** Engage in kind gestures and general goodwill without compromising your faith.
3. **Educate Children:** Teach children the Islamic view of Prophet Jesus and guide them on how to handle questions about Christmas in school or social settings.

By adhering to these guidelines, Muslims can uphold their faith and foster respectful relationships with those of different beliefs while remaining true to Islamic principles.

Reminder for Muslims

Celebrating or endorsing Christmas is not just a cultural practice but a theological endorsement of beliefs contradictory to Islam. As Allah commands:

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].” (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:42)

Remaining steadfast in your faith while embodying kindness and wisdom ensures the integrity of your beliefs and relationships.

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